

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 15343 061337Z

43

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SUBJECT: WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE - OPENING SESSIONS - NOVEMBER 5, 1974

REF: ROME 15235

1. FIRST SESSION WFC OPENED WITH CEREMONIAL SPEECHES BY UN SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM, ITALIAN PRESIDENT LEONE AND WFC SYG MAREI GUISEPPI MEDICI ELECTED PRESIDENT WFC AND AGENDA, RULES OF PROCEDURE, COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AND MEMBERSHIP CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE APPROVED ROUTINELY. ELECTION OF OFFICERS POSTPONED PENDING SETTLEMENT QUESTIONS OF SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF BUREAU CURRENTLY BEING NEGOTIATED BETWEEN GROUP B AND 88 (REFTEL).

2. MAREI MADE CHARACTERISTICALLY MODERATE SPEECH, STRESSING HIS NOW FAMILIAR "THREE PILLARS" OF FOOD PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION AND WORLD FOOD SECURITY. HE HIGHLIGHTED NEED MOBILIZE HUMAN RESOURCES AND MODERNIZE
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PAGE 02 ROME 15343 061337Z

AGRICULTURE IN LDCE, WITH SUPPORT OF DEVELOPED

COUNTRIES. MAREI ENDORSED IN BROAD TERMS NEED FOR COORDINATING GROUP ON FINANCING ALONG LINES U.S. IDEAS. ON RESERVES QUESTION HE SUPPORTED NEGOTIATIONS AMONG MAJOR GRAIN IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS ON PRECISE CLOSELY ORGANIZED SCHEME OF RESERVES AS NECESSARY TO EFFECTIVENESS OF WIDER FAO UNDERTAKING ON FOOD SECURITY. ON FOLLOW-UP MECHANISMS HE AGAIN URGED COORDINATING MECHANISM SIMILAR TO WORLD FOOD COUNCIL IDEA WHICH HE FLOATED INFORMALLY AT THIRD PREPCOM.

3. AFTERNOON SESSION OPENED WITH SPEECH BY SECRETARY KISSINGER, WHICH WAS VERY WARMLY RECEIVED. FIFTEEN HUNDRED COPIES AVAILABLE AT MEETING WERE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY EXHAUSTED.

4. GENERAL DEBATE IN PLENARY CONTINUED THROUGHOUT AFTERNOON. HIGHLIGHTS: ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES GAVE LONG SPEECH HIGHLY CRITICAL OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND US IN PARTICULAR. HE ACCUSED US OF CHEATING LDCS ON DOLLAR DEVALUATION AND NON-CONVERTIBILITY AND SAID RESOURCES FLOWING TO LDCS SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED AID, BUT RATHER PROPER COMPENSATION FOR LOSSES SUFFERED AT HANDS OF DCS.

5. FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL BOERMA SPOKE ON CENTRAL ROLE OF FAO IN ATTACKING FOOD PROBLEM, BUT COUCHED DESCRIPTION OF FAO UNDERTAKING ON FOOD SECURITY IN CAREFUL MANNER, LEAVING WAY OPEN FOR US PROPOSED RESERVES COORDINATING GROUP.

6. ALGERIAN DELEGATE READ MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENNE, WHICH, WHILE MAKING ALGERIAN POSITION CLEAR, WAS RELATIVELY RESTRAINED IN TONE. ALGERIAN SAID INFLATION CAUSED AND MAINTAINED BY INDUSTRIAL NATIONS. HE CRITICIZED, WITH APPARENT UNAWARENESS OF IRONY, DELIBERATE LIMITATION OF SUPPLY TO KEEP PRICES HIGH AND CALLED FOR RADICAL READJUSTMENT INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS.

7. SPEAKING FOR UNCTAD, GAMANI COREA CONCENTRATED ON PRODUCTION AND TRADE ISSUES. ON TRADE, HE NOTED GENERAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ROME 15343 061337Z

FAILURE OF LDC EXPORT EARNINGS TO KEEP PACE WITH COST OF IMPORTS. HE CALLED FOR NEW INITIATIVES TO DEALY WITH COMMODITY PROBLEM, INCLUDING BUFFER STOCKS, INDEXATION AND MULTILATERAL CONTRACTING.

8. FRENCH DELEGATE EMPHASIZED PROPER UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE SOIL, SUPPORTED FOOD SECURITY SYSTEM AS PRIORITY OBJECTIVE OF WFC AND SPEAKING FOR EC SAID COMMUNITY PREPARED

DISCUSS TRADE QUESTIONS LINKED TO FOOD PROBLEM, BUT IT IMPOSSIBLE GO BEYOND GENERAL DISCUSSIONS IN WFC. ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE IN MTN.

9. SRI LANKA AGRICULTURAL MINISTER DEVOTED MOST OF SPEECH TO PROMOTION SRI LANKA PROPOSED FERTILIZER FUND UNDER CONSIDERATION AT CONFERENCE.

10. SAUDI ARABIAN DELEGATE MADE STRONG DEFENSE OF OIL PRICING POLICIES SAYING CURRENT PRICES WERE ADJUSTMENT OF EARLIER SITUATION WHEN OIL SOLD AT NON-ECONOMIC PRICES TO DCS. HE SAID OIL INCOME NOT INCOME BUT LIQUIDATION OF CAPITAL. ON FOOD, SAUDI IDENTIFIED CORE OF LDC PROBLEM AS ADVERSE TERM OF TRADE. HE REVIEWED CURRENT SAUDI DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND SAID HIS COUNTRY PREPARED FINANCE SELECTED PROJECTS IN SELECTED LDCS.

11. EGYPTIAN SPEECH GENERALLY CONCILITATORY IN TONE. STATED THAT FOOD SHOULD NOT BE USED AS ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL WEAPON. ON SPECIFIC ISSUES DELEGATE SUPPORTED NEED FOR FOLLOW-UP, 3 YEAR ADVANCE PLANNING FOR FOOD AID, WFP PREPOSITIONED STOCKS AND MARKET ACCESS FOR LDCS. HE ALSO MADE POINT OF SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL AS WELL AS NATIONAL RESERVES, REFLECTING EGYPTIAN INTEREST IN HAVING ROLE AS REGIONAL STOCKHOLDER.

12. ROMANIAN DELEGATE IDENTIFIED HIS COUNTRY WITH LDCS, MADE USUAL ATTACKS ON COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM, CALLED FOR DEVELOPED CONTRY CREDITS, TECHNOLOGY AND MARKET ACCESS. END VOLPE

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